

**A GOAL** up at half-time on Saturday at Woking. Wycombe Wanderers were subjected to a fearful pounding in the first 30 minutes of the second half before scoring twice in four minutes to clinch a flattering victory.

Before the late flurry, it was more a question of whether Wycombe could hold out for the last 15 minutes rather than wondering about a £40 bonus from the sponsors. But Lady Luck chose to shine on the Blues and the three points means they move up a place to third in the Rothmans Isthmian League at

## Woking 0, Wycombe Wanderers 3

### REPORT BY STUART EARP

#### Leatherhead's expense.

A 3-0 scoreline usually means only one thing but even Wanderers will concede they were lucky to notch up their goalscoring bonus. To my mind there were certainly not worth three goals on Saturday and yet despite Woking's second half pressure the Blues were worthy winners of the points at stake.

The home side looked woefully disorganised and their supporters were moaning throughout the first half as the players struggled to put their game together. It was the two former Wanderers who stood out from the rest, Dave Alexander and Derek Cotterill, both working hard

to improve the club's current position in the table.

Conditions weren't easy at Kingfield with the dry pitch making the ball bounce awkwardly — something the players have not had to contend with since the start of the season. Wanderers had other problems too, in as much as Paul Birdseye missed the game through injury, Gavin Fraser deputised with his usual gritty performance while Steve Hill made his league debut for the Blues against the club he left only a week ago.

Hill took some time to get in tune with his colleagues but darted in bravely to grab the second goal. The other two came from Howard Kettleborough who enjoyed a fine game in the centre of the attack. Behind him the midfield men struggled to dominate at any stage, although it must be said that Peter Cruse had a hand in all three goals.

If one had to single out a man of the match then John Maskell would be my choice, however unlikely it might seem in a 3-0 victory. John handled perfectly all afternoon and cut out more crosses than usual. Two brilliant saves denied Woking goals in each half and the Blues' keeper will not play better all season.

The first goal came after six minutes. Cruse received the ball on half way, pushed it past Cotterill and then sent a deep cross into the box. Kettleborough got to the ball first and sent in a low header which went over Fred Dakin's arms and just under the crossbar. The second choice goalkeeper must take most of the blame as he was caught fractionally off his line.

#### DAKIN SUSPECT

Dakin, in fact, looked suspect throughout the 90 minutes and once miskicked so badly that he sent the ball against the back of a Wycombe player inside his penalty area. These mistakes gave the Wycombe fans plenty to shout about behind the Woking goal — something which could hardly have helped Dakin's confidence.

Maskell's superb first half stop came after 11 minutes. Alexander set up the chance for Alan Morton who side-footed from the corner but saw Maskell push out an arm to deflect the ball away.

That was the last chance created by either side until the 43rd minute. Most of the first half action took place in midfield where no-one could gain a stranglehold on the game. Wanderers had the edge in the first 45 minutes but their attacks broke down and too often no-one was around to cash in on Kettleborough's clever flicks.

Alexander drilled a 43rd minute shot just over the top after Pearson had been dispossessed on half way but at half-time Wycombe must have been reasonably happy with the way things were going. If they thought it was going to be as easy in the second half they were given an extremely rude shock by the home side.

Whatever new manager Pat Finn said to his men at the interval certainly did the trick for they came out and kept Wycombe on the rack for fully half an hour. Only another sterling display by the back four, coupled with Maskell's goalkeeping, kept Wycombe in the match.

#### 13-4 ON CORNERS

The Blues escaped from their own half on barely half a dozen occasions — and then only briefly as Woking encamped inside Wycombe territory. The corner ratio of 13-4 to the home side is a good measure of the pressure.

Two fine pieces of work by Fraser kept Wanderers in front, firstly when he raced across to tackle Steve Cosham and later when he cleared off the line from a corner. Wanderers could do nothing to stem the tide. No-one was able to slow the game down and play the ball around with any accuracy as Woking kept up the unrelenting pressure.

Maskell's second masterful save came in the 72nd minute. Alan Phillips gave away a free kick on the edge of the box and as Cosham ran as a decoy, the ball was slipped to Alexander who crashed a drive past the defensive wall. Maskell must have seen it late but flung himself across to parry the ball.

Wanderers managed to break out in the 75th minute when Pearson dribbled skilfully into the box and was brought down by Alan Turner. Referee Drewe gave only an indirect free kick for obstruction and Dakin made his best save of the match to hold Pearson's powerful shot.

Wycombe fans were still wondering if their side could hold out when two goals turned the whole match upside down. A 79th minute corner brought the second goal with Cruse curling the ball in, Keith Mead heading on and Hill nodding home from close range.

Four minutes later Pearson found Cruse on the right with a lovely pass. He took the ball on and crossed low into the box. Rob Pollard, who along with Dakin and Morton, will want to forget this game as quickly as possible, completely missed his clearance as the ball bobbed and Kettleborough snapped up the chance.

Ironically it might have been 4-0 soon afterwards when Ray Poole almost found his own net — but another goal would have been just too much for Woking to stomach!

**WOKING:** F. Dakin; R. Pollard, A. Turner, H. Poole, D. Cotterill; A. Brown, H. Hill, T. Pearce (sub. K. Oram / 70 mins); D. Alexander, A. Morton, S. Cosham.

**WYCOMBE:** J. Maskell; G. Fraser, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; P. Cruse, J. Priestley, M. Hillfield; I. Pearson, H. Kettleborough, S. Hill, Sub D. Evans (not used).

**Referee:** P. Drewe (Uppingham).  
**Half-time:** 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Kettleborough 2 (6, 83), Hill (79).